

Lesson Plan 3: A Day in a Legislator's Life

(can be adapted to all grade levels)

Summary: Member comes to the classroom for a 50-55 minute class and engages students in a discussion of what a legislator does.

Teacher Preparation: Talk to the students about the member who will be visiting. Biographies and other materials are available: www.leg.wa.gov/legislature

Member Preparation: Select a day from your session calendar that shows a variety of activities. If possible, put on a transparency for overhead projector.

Back to School Program Goals:

- Teach students about what it's like to be a state legislator: the debate, negotiation, and compromise that are necessary in developing public policy.
- Let students know that their ideas count.

Agenda for class period:

2 minutes Transition students.

5 minutes Member introduces him/herself and explains (important to keep this brief to keep students' attention):

- Name and title (may need to explain in more detail to younger children)
- Some personal background - school attended, favorite subjects, current non-legislative employment, etc.
- History including how and why he/she was drawn to public service and the Legislature.

20 minutes Ask students what they do in a typical day, then talk about a legislator's day:

- Engage the students about what you do in a typical day, e.g., dealing with constituents; listening to diverse viewpoints on difficult issues; negotiating, compromising, and decision-making; and balancing personal and professional life with legislative life.
- Ask students how they would handle issues that come up.
- Consider inviting your spouse or children to talk about what it's like to have a family member in the Legislature.

15 minutes Member invites students to ask general questions or to make comments

Tips for Talking with Students:

- Try to let as many of the students talk as possible.
- Use personal stories to engage the students.
- Let the students know how to contact you.

Assessment:

Ask students to write down two things they learned from the visit that they did not know before.